CURSOR™
Programs for PET™ Computers

> "Everything considered, a
> determined soul will always
> manage."   – Albert Camus

A CURSORY GLANCE

A CURSOR subscriber needs your help: he has recently had an operation for throat cancer. Due to the operation and quite a weight loss, he is no longer able to use a vibrator "talker" unit. He has heard of a board that produces words by pushing buttons. If any of you have heard of such a device, or have friends that might know where to get good current information, please get in touch with CURSOR right away, and we will pass the information along. Currently, he is only able to write things down, and of course finds that mode of communicating to be terribly restrictive.

When we think ahead a bit about where the small computer revolution is going to take us in a few years, I think that the potential for devices to help the disabled will be a very important area. I have no illusions about 8K Pets solving all the problems of the disabled, but there may be an important side effect: far more people will know something about computers and the type of problems they can solve (as well as the problems that they create). The Junior High down the street from our office has two Pets, and a dedicated math teacher that is turning dozens of kids in the 7th and 8th grades onto the joys of computing. I believe that this coming "wave" of sophisticated computer users will be far more important than the most exciting hardware development you can imagine. People solve problems, and computers are only fancy tools. In the past, these powerful tools have only been available to a very small fraction of our society. Now, anyone with about $800 burning a hole in their wallet can walk home with a remarkably powerful machine (even with all the warts that a Pet or TRS-80 has). And very simply, once people have experienced the possibilities of computing, the world just ain't going to be the same!

A ONE-LINER:

The Amateur Computer Group of New Jersey (1776 Raritan Road, Scotch Plains, NJ 07076) puts out a very nice newsletter, complete with a Pet column. This one line program is sort of cute:

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10 POKE 32768 + 1000*RND(1), 256*RND(1): GOTO 10
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CURSOR #7 HAS THESE PROGRAMS:

COVER   A kaleidoscope pattern by Ken Matthews. Press the "Space" key when you want to see the Table of Contents.

PRICER   A job cost estimation program, designed for contractors that bid on government work, but useful for many other situations.

SOUND!   A CURSOR sound effects library. Here come the French Police, lasers, even birds... Written by Ken Matthews.

MIND   The Mastermind puzzle: try to guess a pattern of four colors.

FBALL   Football on your Pet: play another player, or try your skill against the machine.

PAPER   Yes, you too can be a famous wallpaper designer. Submitted by Ralph Dufour.

SOFTWARE ETHICS REVISITED

Our little article in the Notes for CURSOR #6 brought some interesting mail. Basically, many people support the idea of high-quality, reasonably priced software. Example:

> "Never fear that someone is going to get a free tape out of me for the prices that you charge, (and the QUALITY!!)."

All I can say is "Thanks"! Incidentally, I'd like to pass along whatever information we have about other good products. I think <u>Personal Software</u> has a very good Chess program as well as a Bridge program. Their software is well done, and they are a good company with which to do business. Several people. If you find any "turkeys", and are willing to have a letter with your name and address published in CURSOR, then let us know about the poor software that you have run into. Naturally, since we sell software, we are probably not the best judges, (well, actually, we think we know junk when we see it, and there is some real junk being sold!)

STOCK MARKET BUFFS

Many people are interested in using the Pet for stock market or commodity applications. One place that you might want to try (although I don't know anything about these people):

Microcomputer Investors Association
2415 Ansdel Court
Reston, VA 22091

MORE ABOUT THE PROGRAMS

PRICER... This program is designed for use by a government contractor, but the problem that it solves is quite general. If you have to estimate costs for a job, and you have an overhead rate, a general and accounting "G&A" rate, and a fee or profit, then Pricer can remove some drudegery from your life.

The program on your Cursor tape will need to be customized for your business by changing some DATA statements, then saving the program on another tape. The DATA statements are only changed when the salary of employees changes, or when you add or 'subtract' staff.

At line 40000 there is a set of DATA statements, one for each employee. Each line has four variables:

    INITIALS   Enter the initials of the employee.

    NAME   The name of the person. If you want to maximize the amount of info that this program
                can handle, don't spell out the first names.

    AMOUNT   How much the person is paid, either annual salary or hourly wage.

    TYPE   HR=hourly person, YR=salaried.

The table ends with a line that has three commas in it. At line 41010 is another DATA table that you can customize. It has the prompts for what are known as 'Direct Costs'. End this table with two quotes. Finally, at line 42000 is a table of the months of the year. At some sacrifice in readability, you could shorten the spelling to three letter abreviations in the DATA statement and save a few more bytes. (If you get the feeling that this program is very short on memory, you are correct!) You can also remove the directions at lines 62020-62060...

A nice feature is that when the program asks you who will work on the job, if you type a question mark, it will print the current table of employee data. Another comment for non-government users: when the program shows "loaded" figures, it has taken the amount actually paid to the employee, added the overhead percentage, then applied the G&A to that number. Finally, the profit is applied to the entire amount.

SOUND!... A wonderful sound effects library, written by Ken T. Matthews. You will need to attach a small amplifier to your Pet as we described in CURSOR Notes #3 (Ground is pin 12, sound is pin M).

Due to a suggestion from a subscriber, we are adopting a new convention: all programs that have sound from here on will end with an exclaimation point. As in 'SOUND!'. If you have not yet gone to the trouble to hook your Pet up for sound, you are really missing a great feature.

MIND... Glen Fisher has done it again: there may be many versions of the game of Mastermind, but you probably won't find a better implementation than this super program. Now, if the Pet just had color...

FBALL... Mark Pelczarski wrote this very nice game of Football. You will want to have the following handy when you play:

```
OFFENSIVE PLAYS:

1 Run  2 Sweep  3 Screen Pass  4 Long Pass
5 Punt 6 Field Goal Attempt    7 Time Out

DEFFENSIVE PLAYS:
1 Hold  2 Normal  3 Blitz  4 Intercept Pass
5 Punt Return     6 Block Kick  7 Time Out
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"A motion to adjourn is always in order".

Robert Heinlein
The Notebooks of Lazarus Long

PAPER... You don't need complicated directions for this neat little program. One warning: please don't use quotes in your pattern, as the program doesn't like them one bit!

SKYLES ELECTRIC WORKS

I recently purchased the 8k memory expansion board from our friendly Pet dealer. (Always buy from a dealer if you can: it gives you someone to yell at if things go wrong. Also, you can see things before you buy them). So far, my experience with the Skyles board is good, which means that it was easy to install (took me about 15 minutes, and I am very slow). I like the fact that it fits inside the cabinet of the Pet, and that it seems to be well made. The only critique I can offer is that the directions don't mention the danger of hooking the power up backwards, which I imagine would do violence to your machine! Skyles also sells a large keyboard that I haven't seen. My friendly Pet dealer has sold one, and says that the 'touch' (a crucial aspect of any keyboard) is very good.

A final note: adding 8k additional memory makes a LOT of difference in the type of programs that you can do on the Pet. So often, 8k is a serious limitation (for example, PRICER in this issue was quite hard to fit into 8k). Soon, memory will be much cheaper, and 16k Pets will be the rule rather than the exception.